

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## U.S. Unveils Plan to Assist Children Facing Adversity

By Kathryn McConnell | Staff Writer | 20 December 2012

Washington — Achieving a world where all children survive, grow up with protective family care and are free from deprivation, exploitation and danger is the goal of a new blueprint for U.S. international assistance.

The five-year plan, introduced December 19 at the White House, is the latest step in the ongoing U.S. effort to improve the lives of children worldwide. In June, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) joined the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the governments of Ethiopia and India in an event called "Child Survival Call to Action," designed to accelerate progress on newborn, child and maternal survival. To date, 168 countries have signed on to the initiative.

USAID will implement the new plan with the departments of State, Labor, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and Defense, along with the Peace Corps and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR,) in more than 100 countries.

More than 100 civil society and faith-based organizations endorsed the plan. A public-private partnership is being formed to mobilize resources to meet its objectives, USAID says.

Research shows that children who experience violence or are exploited, abandoned, abused or severely neglected face significant threats to their survival and to their social and economic well-being, USAID says. Children in adversity do not have protective family care, or they live in abusive households, on the streets or in institutions. They are trafficked, participate in armed groups or are exploited for labor. Others face risks from extreme poverty, disease, disability or disaster, USAID says.

"The science is clear. Childhood experiences shape adult outcomes, including long-term health, cognitive development, academic achievement and one's ability to be gainfully and safely employed," said Neil Boothby, U.S. government special adviser on children in adversity.

The five-year plan says evidence shows that nations that invest in their children have promising futures.

Thirty percent of the world's children do not reach their developmental potential because of poverty, disease, conflict and disaster, according to USAID. "If we are serious about change, really breaking through cycles of poverty and inequality, we must start early," Boothby said.

The plan seeks to build strong beginnings by

strengthening child welfare and protection systems, putting family care first, and protecting children from domestic and sexual violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. The plan aims to significantly reduce the number of children living outside of family care; increase families' capacity to feed, educate, nurture and protect their children; and increase the number of children meeting age-appropriate growth and developmental milestones.

The plan states that past efforts to assist vulnerable children in low- and middle-income countries focused on single vulnerabilities — such as being affected by HIV/AIDS, or being in an emergency, child labor or trafficking situation. "Coordinated, multifaceted action can help ensure that children in adversity benefit fully from polices and services," it says.

In 2010, the United States joined governments, international organizations, civil society groups and private sector companies to create a global commitment to improve child nutrition during the 1,000 days from the start of a woman's pregnancy through the child's second year, a period that is critical to a child's ability to thrive for a lifetime.

## Russian Journalists Try "American-Style" Media Jobs

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer | 20 December 2012

Washington — In the first program of its kind, a dozen Russian journalists got a firsthand look at how American news organizations operate during an exchange program that put them in jobs working for news outlets across the United States.

For four weeks — from November 26 through December 20 — the Moscow-based journalists, ages 23 to 36, were assigned to various U.S. media outlets to learn about U.S. media law, company standards and codes of conduct, and to gain a better understanding of the U.S. mass media environment. *The Wall Street Journal*, *Miami Herald*, *Seattle Times*, *Oregon Public Broadcasting* and *World Policy Journal* are among the news operations they observed.

At the same time, 12 young American journalists did a stint with Russian news organizations.

On the last day of the program, the Russian and U.S. journalists shared their experiences and observations in a digital video conference linking Washington and Moscow, where the journalists were located, respectively.

Olga Filina, an editor with Ogoniok weekly magazine in Russia, spent her four-week exchange working at the *Miami Herald*. "I'm really a little bit jealous," she said, "about your community [and community news coverage] culture, which we don't have in Russia, unfortunately. Maybe this is one of the reasons why our civil society is

not so developed yet." The Russian media, she said, focus more on national and international news.

But the Russian journalists had no problem adapting to the community coverage beat. Ivan Yurchenko, for example, reported on a local American football game that became one of the most-read stories published by the *Seattle Times* in Washington state.

Yurchenko, an editor in Moscow for the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* newspaper website, went to his first American football game, which ended with a Seattle Seahawks victory over the Arizona Cardinals. His account of this "historic event" was even tweeted by the *Washington Post*, which is based in the U.S. capital and is one of the leading U.S. newspapers.

The U.S.-Russian Young Media Professionals Exchange Program is the tangible fruit of the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission's Sub-Working Group on Mass Media. The commission was formed in 2009 when Presidents Obama and Medvedev agreed upon the need to make a fresh start in relations between their countries. The commission's goal is to improve coordination between Russia and the United States on shared challenges and to explore new opportunities for partnership in areas of mutual interest.

The Young Media Professionals Exchange was made possible by the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The private, nonprofit Knight Foundation promotes quality journalism and advances media innovation across the United States. The ICFJ is a Washington-based nonprofit professional organization dedicated to promoting independent, quality journalism worldwide. Since its founding in 1984, the ICFJ has worked directly with more than 70,000 journalists in 180 countries.

On the Russian side, the exchange program was coordinated by ITAR-TASS, one of the world's largest news agencies, and the Union of Journalists of Moscow, which bills itself as a nonpolitical public association founded for the protection of the rights and freedoms of Russian journalists. The union's membership includes some 70,000 journalists and media workers and 85 regional news organizations.

Both the Russian and American journalists in this exchange program gave detailed accounts of their experiences on their blog, which can be read on Tumblr.

### **USAID Mobilizes Record Private Capital for Small Businesses**

19 December 2012

Washington — The U.S. Agency for International

Development (USAID) has mobilized a record amount of private capital to support small businesses in developing countries.

USAID's Development Credit Authority (DCA) worked with 45 financial institutions in 23 countries in 2012 to unlock up to \$525 million in private capital for underserved entrepreneurs in developing countries, the agency said in a December 18 news release. The financing, made available through 34 partial credit guarantees, is the most USAID has mobilized in a single year.

While USAID provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance around the world in support of U.S. foreign policy goals, its Development Credit Authority works with investors, local financial institutions and development organizations to design and deliver investment alternatives that unlock financing for entrepreneurs in the developing world.

Guarantees are a cost-effective way to get local, private financing into the hands of creditworthy borrowers. From low-income Haitians seeking to rebuild in Port-au-Prince, to women-owned small businesses in Kabul, to solar companies in Uganda, USAID is enabling private markets in the developing world to provide financing to the people who need it most.

Reflecting Obama administration priorities in food security and clean energy, these guarantees will open \$219 million in bank financing for food security, \$77 million for renewable energy and \$215 million for small enterprises, USAID said. More than half of the \$525 million of approved credit guarantees are in sub-Saharan Africa.

An additional 39,000 small businesses will soon be able to access local financing because of USAID credit guarantees, reflecting the agency's drive to leverage private sector resources for international development. Thanks to increased employment and other benefits for the families of these small business owners and their workers, these loans will translate into more than a million people whose lives have been improved by increased access to finance.

With the security of USAID's guarantees, up to \$2.7 billion in credit has been made available to entrepreneurs in 70 developing countries since 1999. With historically low default rates, USAID has paid out only \$9.1 million in claims across the entire portfolio while collecting \$11 million from banks in fees.

The following are highlights from DCA's FY 2012 portfolio, with links to more information on USAID's website:

- USAID partnered with Acumen Fund, a nonprofit global venture fund, to facilitate the flow of up to \$15 million in debt capital to social enterprises working to provide critical goods and services in Africa and South Asia.

- USAID will partially back private loans made to smallholder farmer organizations, including those with contracts from the World Food Programme–Purchase for Progress initiative.

- New guarantees will unlock \$30 million in Haiti for private lending toward housing, construction and small businesses affected by the 2010 earthquake.

- A new credit guarantee will allow Root Capital to disburse more than \$50 million in loans, reaching more than 1 million small-scale farmers over the next five years.

### **Better Global Health, Less Poverty Projected for 2030**

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer | 18 December 2012

Washington — A rise in the middle class, an older population and greater demand for resources will be among the challenges of the year 2030. Adequate planning and foresight can prevent a crisis in resources, a new report concludes, if leaders set their sights to the future.

These visions of the years ahead emerge from *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, a report issued by the U.S. National Intelligence Council every four years since 1997. The agency issues the forecast in presidential election years, offering a body of research for an incoming administration to consult in setting policy directions.

Fewer people will be poor than at any other time in history as an expanded and more prosperous middle class emerges, the report foresees. Widespread economic growth and greater educational opportunity will help people rise to the middle class, it predicts, and they'll want a higher standard of living. *Global Trends 2030* projects that demand for food and water will grow by as much as 40 percent over the next 17 years.

"We are not necessarily headed into a world of scarcities," said council Chairman Christopher Kojm, "but leaders will need to act to avert such a future." Kojm spoke at a press briefing upon the report's release December 10.

The report is specific about what needs to be done; at the same time, it offers no assurances that governments will take the necessary steps to make the best use of available resources. Management of critical resources must become more effective, the report says. Pursuit of new technologies and better governance mechanisms might also mitigate resource challenges, "to avoid the worst

possible outcomes."

Better health care and improved economic status will allow greater numbers of people to reach old age, according to *Global Trends 2030*. Deaths from communicable diseases, such as AIDS, infections that cause diarrhea, malaria and respiratory infections, will decline by nearly 30 percent by 2030.

Larger and more prosperous populations will demand more food, 35 to 40 percent more. The report does foresee "a stable supply of agricultural commodities to meet global food security needs," while it also suggests a number of factors such as climate change or poor resource management that could erode that supply. "Such a development would create shortages that could have dire geopolitical, social and economic repercussions."

Technology, again, could provide some solutions, with proper development of techniques such as genetically modified crops and precision agriculture and irrigation.

The increased frequency of extreme weather events and the degree of their impact in recent years is beyond doubt to the report's editors, and "this pattern almost certainly will continue during the next 20 years." Increases in population and expanding urbanization will leave more people vulnerable to the ferocity of extreme weather. The key factor to moderate the impact, *Global Trends* says, will be wise investment in risk-management and emergency-response operations.

Just as dangerous as raging storms are prolonged droughts and temperature extremes, which have diminished agricultural production significantly in some places. The report notes persistent droughts in several of the world's great river systems — the Nile, Tigris-Euphrates, Niger, Amazon, Mekong — and describes them as events consistent with the predicted consequences of climate change.

Migration is expected to be an influential trend in the future, driven by the same motives for relocation that exist today. They include globalization, income inequalities across regions and countries, and the strengthening of migrant networks that maintain ties between migrants and their homelands.

Work, opportunities and better wages will send many young people to search for work outside their native countries. Another important demographic trend — urbanization — will provide those opportunities, expanding the world's city dwellers from 50 percent of global population currently to 60 percent in 2030.

"What this means is that another 1.4 billion people will need housing, roads, power, infrastructure and

employment in urban areas," Kojm said. The report projects this urbanization will lead to a building boom unlike anything the world has ever seen.

"The volume of urban construction for housing, office space and transport services ... could roughly equal the entire volume of such construction to date in world history," the report says.

### Online University Courses Revolutionize Learning

By Kathryn McConnell | Staff Writer | 18 December 2012

Washington — A revolution in higher education is taking place across the United States and the world.

The revolution is being led by the groups Coursera, Udacity and edX, which provide online university courses from some of the biggest names in postsecondary education to students all over the world at no cost.

The largest of the three — the for-profit Coursera — has more than 2 million students enrolled in at least one course offered by any of its 33 partners, including Johns Hopkins, Princeton, Duke and London universities.

The company was founded in late 2011 by two Stanford University computer science professors after they noticed that earlier in the year Stanford had enrolled some 100,000 students in online courses they had developed. "We ... realized we needed to live up to the technology we'd developed," said co-founder Andrew Ng.

He said free courses offered by Coursera partners democratize learning.

"Most students will never have access to classes from the top universities, Ng said. "Now, if they wake up tomorrow morning and feel like signing up for a Princeton, Caltech [California Institute of Technology] or Stanford class, they can now do so for free. I think that's just amazing!" Coursera's more than 200 "massive open online courses," or MOOCs, range from the humanities to social and basic sciences, business, law, finance and engineering, Ng said.

He said that not charging even a minimal fee to take a course is important to the company, whose staff consists of about 30 people. "When I look at the neediest and the most vulnerable people in our society ... to throw up a barrier preventing these students from accessing our content would just be a tragedy," he said. "I'm much more interested in educating people than in making money, and offering the courses for free is a big part of that."

More than half of Coursera's students come from outside the United States, notably Russia, India, the United

Kingdom and Brazil, Ng said.

He explained that Coursera's courses resemble those taught in person, with lectures (via video subtitled in Spanish, Chinese, Russian and other languages) and homework assignments.

Coursera so far has attracted \$22 million from venture capitalists and from university partners. The funding allows the company to develop its technology and add more partnerships so it can reach more students, according to Ng.

He predicts that the company eventually may make a profit by introducing top students to companies wanting to hire them and charging the company for the service. It also could generate revenue by charging fees for university-branded certificates or by licensing course content, he said.

### UDACITY

Another outgrowth of free computer science classes offered by Stanford is Udacity, founded in 2011 by three California robotics experts. A few weeks after its launch, Udacity had more than 160,000 students in more than 190 countries enrolled in its first class, Introduction to Artificial Intelligence. It now has about 1 million students in North America, Europe, Brazil and India.

Udacity bills itself as "a 21st-century university" offering interactive computer and business courses in units of a week's worth of work. Its teaching method includes quizzes embedded into lecture videos and assignments with no due dates. So far, Silicon Valley-based Udacity has six educational institution partners, according to its website. It offers courses in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subject areas and business.

### EDX

A third member of the online learning group is the nonprofit edX, launched by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in May with courses mainly in technical fields such as electronics and computer science. With its partners the University of California-Berkeley, Wellesley College and the University of Texas, edX pursues the goal of educating 1 billion students.

In December, edX added Georgetown University as a partner. Georgetown's commitment to make quality education widely available informed its decision to join edX as part of its "technology-enhanced learning" initiative, said Provost Robert Groves. "We are able to live our mission in new ways and better understand what it

means to educate the whole person ... through the opportunities presented in this new and evolving space," he said.

"This platform gives us new ways of understanding methods of teaching and learning," he added.

### **U.S. Sanctions Lebanese Agent Working for Assad Regime**

18 December 2012

Washington — The United States has sanctioned the former Lebanese information minister for working on behalf of the Assad regime in Syria.

On December 17, the U.S. Department of the Treasury designated former Lebanese Minister of Information and Tourism Michel Samaha under Executive Order (E.O.) 13441, which targets people undermining Lebanese sovereignty, including those who are supporting attempts by the Assad regime to incite violence inside Lebanon.

The Department of State also designated Michel Samaha as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under E.O. 13224. As a result of the action, U.S. persons are prohibited from engaging in any transactions with Samaha, and any assets Samaha holds under U.S. jurisdiction are frozen, the Treasury Department said in a December 17 news release.

"The United States will continue to expose any attempts by the Assad regime to meddle in the affairs of its neighbors and further destabilize the region," said Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen. "We will continue to work with our international partners to ensure that the sovereignty of Lebanon is respected and upheld."

### **SAMAHA ARRESTED IN AUGUST**

Samaha was arrested by Lebanese authorities in August for plotting to carry out terrorist attacks in Lebanon. He has remained in Lebanese custody and has been charged with plotting to assassinate political and religious figures in Lebanon through targeted bombings. The goal of these attacks appears to have been to incite sectarian strife in northern Lebanon, according to the Treasury Department.

Samaha was also accused of transporting explosives for the planned attacks into Lebanon. In early August, Samaha provided explosives and cash to a paid accomplice. On August 9 the Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF) arrested Samaha and brought him to ISF headquarters, where, after being confronted with the evidence against him, he admitted to complicity in the plot.

Samaha reportedly received the explosives from Ali Mamluk, the former Syrian General Intelligence Directorate Chief and current head of the Syrian National Security Bureau, while visiting Syria. Information available to the U.S. government indicates that Mamluk was involved in a plot with Samaha to conduct bombing attacks against Lebanese political and religious figures in northern Lebanon, and Mamluk provided money and explosives to Samaha for that purpose.

In April Mamluk was listed in the annex of E.O. 13606, which targets those engaging in grave human rights abuses by the government of Syria via information technology. In April 2011 he was listed in the annex of E.O. 13572, which targets persons committing human rights abuses in Syria.

### **China, U.S. to Review Progress on Commerce and Trade Issues**

17 December 2012

Washington — Acting U.S. Secretary of Commerce Rebecca Blank and U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Ron Kirk will host Chinese Vice Premier Wang Qishan in Washington for the 23rd session of the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT), December 18-19. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack also will take part in the discussions to address key agricultural trade issues.

"This year's JCCT is an opportunity for the United States to continue building a strong foundation for our bilateral trade with China," Blank said. "These discussions come at an important time and are an opportunity to set the future trajectory of U.S.-China economic relations. Creating a healthy and balanced trade relationship with China is important to the United States, and our goals for these discussions include securing markets for U.S. exports, protecting intellectual property and eliminating regulatory obstacles in China that obstruct trade. The annual high-level JCCT meeting is the culmination of a year of work, and we look forward to once again engaging with the Chinese on issues of mutual importance to our two countries."

"The JCCT is critical to resolving important trade and investment issues for American stakeholders and to moving our trade relationship with China forward," Kirk said. "This year we're focused on delivering meaningful results on issues including enforcement of intellectual property rights, combating pressures to transfer technology, eliminating trade-distortive industrial policies and removing key obstacles to our exports."

Vilsack said the U.S.-China "bilateral relationship will be strengthened through the exchange that will take place at these meetings."

The JCCT holds high-level plenary meetings on an annual basis to review progress made by working groups that focus on a wide variety of trade issues. These working groups meet throughout the year to address topics such as intellectual property rights, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and medical devices, information technology, tourism, commercial law, environment and statistics.

Established in 1983, the JCCT is the main forum for addressing bilateral trade issues and promoting commercial opportunities between the United States and China. The 2011 JCCT meeting was held in Chengdu, China, where China agreed – among other issues – to improve intellectual property enforcement, delink innovation policies to government procurement preferences and provide a fair and level playing field in China’s strategic emerging industries, the Commerce Department said.

China was the largest supplier of U.S. goods imports in 2011, and the third-largest market for U.S. exports in 2011 (after Canada and Mexico), Commerce said. U.S. goods exports to China were \$104 billion in 2011, up 542 percent since 2000. Trade in services with China (exports and imports) totaled \$38 billion in 2011; services exports were \$27 billion and services imports were \$11 billion.

### **U.S. Lists “Notorious Markets” of Stolen, Counterfeit Goods**

17 December 2012

Washington – There is good news and bad news in the global battle against marketplaces that offer stolen and counterfeit goods, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) says.

USTR Ron Kirk on December 13 announced the results of the Special 301 Out-of-Cycle Review of Notorious Markets. The review lists more than 30 Internet and physical markets that exemplify marketplaces that deal in infringing goods and services, supporting global piracy and counterfeiting.

The review also identifies examples of marketplaces that have been the subject of enforcement actions connected with counterfeiting and piracy, or that may merit further investigation for possible intellectual property rights (IPR) infringements.

But the review also reflects the removal of eight previously listed markets due to law enforcement actions against those markets, or significant voluntary actions by market operators aimed at addressing problems, USTR said.

“We highlight the notorious markets that have a negative

impact on legitimate businesses and industries of all sizes that rely on intellectual property to protect their goods and services,” Kirk said. “I applaud the actions that some markets have taken to begin ridding their virtual and physical marketplaces of pirated and counterfeit goods, as well as enforcement actions taken by certain governments that have resulted in the shutdown of several other markets.”

The Notorious Markets Review identifies particularly infamous markets; it isn't an exhaustive list of all notorious markets around the world, USTR said. Inclusion in the Notorious Markets List does not reflect a finding of a violation of law. Nor does it reflect the United States government’s analysis of the general IPR protection and enforcement climate in the country concerned; such analysis is contained in the annual Special 301 Report issued at the end of April. However, USTR said, it urges the responsible authorities to intensify efforts to combat piracy and counterfeiting in these and similar markets, and to use the information contained in the Notorious Markets Review to pursue legal actions where appropriate.

### **POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS**

The 2012 list highlights positive developments since the issuance of the previous Notorious Markets Review in December 2011. For example, Chinese website Taobao has worked with rights holders to significantly decrease the listing of infringing products for sale through its website, and has committed to continue working to streamline its complaint procedures to further reduce listings of counterfeit products. Similarly, USTR said, Chinese website Sogou has been removed from the new list “based on reports that it has also made notable efforts to work with rights holders to address the availability of infringing content on its site.”

USTR said the Philippine government has taken significant enforcement actions at the Quiapo Shopping District that has reduced the number of counterfeit and pirated goods available for sale there.

In January 2012, the U.S. Department of Justice filed criminal copyright charges against defendants associated with the website MegaUpload, the cyberlocker site that actively promoted the unauthorized distribution of protected content through subscriptions and reward schemes for frequent uploaders. As a result of these actions, USTR said, several cyberlockers in the past year have changed their business models to reduce or eliminate piracy. Others, such as btjunkie, also included in last year’s list, have shut down their operations completely, USTR said.

In addition, the Mexican government took action to shut

down the operations of the previously listed Bit Torrent Tracker Demonoid. Both Modchip.ca and Consolesource, which were listed for involvement in the marketing of circumvention devices, have also reportedly been shut down before Canada implements its recently enacted Copyright Modernization Act, which includes new provisions against trafficking in circumvention devices. As a result of these actions, these sites are not included in this year's report.

#### BACKGROUND

USTR has identified notorious markets in the Special 301 Report since 2006. In 2010, USTR announced that it would begin to publish the Notorious Markets list separately from the Special 301 Report, to increase public awareness and guide related trade-enforcement actions. USTR published the first stand-alone Notorious Markets list in February 2011 and the second such report in December 2011.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov>)